

June 14, 2022

To the Montgomery County Council

Testimony re Special Appropriation of Funds to MCPD

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) strongly opposes the special appropriation of \$731,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds specifically to the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD).

Yes, the LWVMC is of course in favor of violence prevention. In fact, the LWVMC has long supported the public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence. We also endorse the allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.

What we do not endorse is allocating violence prevention funds only to the county's police department when other county organizations should be involved as well.

Here are programs that should receive some of these funds:

- Gang violence intervention initiatives, such as the Street and Outreach Network run by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, can be positive, non-carceral approaches to reducing gun violence.
- Broader advertising and outreach about the domestic violence prevention programs provided by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and Domestic Violence Coordinating Council can improve access to the services they offer, helping the county to better address intimate partner and domestic violence.

These programs are intended to address gang and domestic violence as the public health issues they are, rather than relying almost exclusively on the law enforcement system. Consequently, the rationale for funneling monies to support these initiatives through the MCPD is unclear, and the LWVMC therefore opposes it.

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